

Compost Troubleshooting

If you are having problems making good compost please don't give up. The causes are often easily remedied, and you can quickly get back on track. Here are some of the common composting problems and solutions.

SYMPTOMS	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
Compost has a bad smell	1) Not enough air / too compacted / too much green material. 2) Too much water 3) Meat, dairy, fish etc in pile	1) Turn the pile and add browns 2) Decrease watering; protect from heavy rain if no lid; turn pile and add browns 3) Leave them out, turn pile and add browns
Centre of pile is dry	1) Not enough water	1) Moisten and turn the pile
Pile has slumped and seems slimy	1) Too much green material	1) Turn pile and add lots of browns
Lots of fruit flies	1) Exposed kitchen scraps	1) Cover kitchen scraps with leaves, grass or a sheet of newspaper
Attracts rats	1) Food available 2) Seeking warmth in winter 3) General	1) Do not put meat, fish or dairy scraps on the pile. Put bricks around the base of compost bin if necessary 2) Turn pile and add browns to release built-up heat. Put bricks around the base of the compost bin if necessary 3) Sprinkle cayenne pepper liberally around the pile
Not heating up	1) Insufficient moisture 2) Poor aeration 3) Lack of greens	1) Add water while turning pile or cover top 2) Turn pile 3) Mix in greens, e.g. grass clippings